



ALEXANDRIA:

SATURDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 2, 1861.

CONGRESS.—The Senate, yesterday, passed one of the appropriation bills. The House of Representatives was mainly engaged in debate on general topics.

VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE.—In the Senate, on Thursday, the bill for the extension of the Winchester and Potomac railroad to Strasburg was under consideration. A message from the Governor concerning the Banks was discussed in the House of Delegates.

A most vital and important subject connected with the election next Monday, is the vote on the question of the reference of the action of the State Convention to the people, for approval or rejection. We earnestly exhort the voters, of all parties, to vote for this proposition. Its adoption can do no harm—it may be the means of effecting great good. Let it be remembered that this Convention will have in its hands not only our federal relations, but our whole State organization. Only those who wish to precipitate action can reasonably object to this conservative movement. Besides, the people owe it to themselves to decide for themselves as to any change sought to be made in our connections with the Federal Government, or the States, or any change in our State matters. Let this be looked to—and let the vote be for "Reference to the People."

The secession members of Congress seem disposed to avail themselves of all the advantages of the Union, notwithstanding they say they are not. Mr. Ashmore, of South Carolina, writes to Postmaster Dix that he has received a large amount of public documents but wishes to know if he may frank them. The Postmaster General says in reply that the Government cannot alter the relations existing between it and the States, and, therefore, not recognizing the right of any State to secede the members of Congress from such State are still entitled to the franking privilege. He adds, very significantly, "If, however, as I learn is the case, you sincerely and decidedly entertain the conviction that by that act South Carolina ceased to be a member of the Confederacy and is now a foreign State, it will be for you to determine how far you can conscientiously exercise a privilege, the exercise of which assumes that your own conviction is erroneous, and plainly declares that South Carolina is still in the Union and that you are still a member of the Congress of the United States."

The secession of Virginia, as urged by the signers of the late Congressional Address, is urged mainly on the alleged ground that it is only by such secession with the States already seceded that the Republican party can be deterred from attempting the "coercion" of the latter. The following resolution, passed the Virginia House of Delegates with only five dissentients, and the Senate with only one single vote in the negative: Resolved, That when any one or more of the States has determined, or shall determine, under existing circumstances, to withdraw from the Union, we are unalterably opposed to any attempt on the part of the Federal Government to coerce the same into re-union or submission, and that we will resist the same by all the means in our power. Virginia's protest against "coercion" does not require secession to make it significant and impressive.

Joel E. Matthews, of Dallas county, Ala., has offered the services of 200 negroes to the Governor of Alabama. In addition to this, the same gentleman deposited in the Bank of Mobile on the 23d of January, \$15,000 to the credit of Alabama for State defence.

Hon. Wm. Smith would have signed the late address of several of the members of Congress from Virginia, had he not been absent from Washington, in consequence of indisposition. His health is improving and he will probably resume his seat in a few days.

The Ohio State Journal, (Republican) speaking of Wendell Phillips' late demonstration in Boston, says:—"We fear that before society can be peacefully reconstructed, and the Union made to take the medicine that is honestly meant for its good, such people as Phillips must be suppressed."

Illinois, has a law allowing persons passing through or tarrying within her limits, to take with them their colored servants, and to retain them there for a period not exceeding 60 days.

Wm. L. Goggins, is a candidate for the State Convention, in Bedford county, in favor of first endeavoring to restore the Union, before resorting to Secession.

From now, until after the election on Monday, it will be proper to receive with caution all "sensational" telegraphic despatches from Washington or elsewhere.

The speech of Mr. Clemens, of Va., is said to be receiving a wide circulation—and in the North Western part of the State, the demand for it is said to be very great.

There is said to be over thirty thousand barrels of mackerel stored in Gloucester, waiting sale, the Southern market for fish being almost closed.

Rev. Mr. Slater, of Clarke county, Va., in consequence of continued indisposition, has had to suspend for a time his ministerial labors.

The House of Representatives has now "Evening Sessions," at which members make speeches to small audiences.

The candidates for the State Convention in Fauquier delivered able addresses to the people, at Warrenton, last Monday.

NEWS OF THE DAY.

"To show the very age and body of the times."

The New Orleans Delta fears that Gov. Houston is opposed to extending the area of the Southern Confederacy into Mexico. It says:—"We are informed, on authority which we cannot presume to question, that, a very short time since, Gov. Houston was actually negotiating with the British bond-holders in reference to a plan for the invasion and conquest of Mexico; that he had offered to head an expedition into that country, and guaranteed to consummate the project of conquest, on condition that he should be supplied, by the bond-holders, with the necessary means."

On Wednesday last, Mr. W. W. Holden, of the Raleigh (North Carolina) Standard, assaulted Mr. John Spelman, of the State Journal, in Fayetteville street, Raleigh, with a cane, inflicting several severe wounds. Mr. Spelman drew a revolver and fired three ineffective shots at his assailant before friends interfered to separate them. The cause of the quarrel was some insulting epithets applied to Mr. Spelman.

The South Carolinians have "no end of trouble" on fixing upon the State flag. The Mercury of Tuesday announces the last change. The Legislature last night again altered the design of the State flag. It now consists of a blue field, with a white palmetto tree in the middle, upright. The white crescent in the upper flag-staff corner remains as before, the horns pointing upward. This may be regarded as final.

A circular of Messrs. Arles Dulong & Co., Lyons mentions that although the United States takes annually about £1,000,000 worth of silk goods from Europe, the fall in prices since the outbreak of the disunion crisis has not been more than between 2 and 3 per cent on the superior description, owing to the limited supply in the market. In the common descriptions there has been a reduction of between 5 and 12 per cent.

One night recently a number of runaway negroes from the border counties of Maryland, passed through York county, Pa., on their way to freedom. The next day they were pursued and captured in Adams county, and taken back to their old quarters. No opposition was made to their return by the citizens of the village in which they were captured.

A correspondent of the South Carolinian writes from Charleston, under date of the 26th, as follows:—"Active preparations are in progress to take the form held by Maj. Anderson, and it will be done when the proper time comes. Delay in deference to the earnest request of other seceding States seems to be the reason why it is not immediately to be abandoned."

A benevolent and eccentric maiden lady, Miss P. Townsend by name, died recently in Boston. In her will she leaves \$20,000 to the Home for the Relief of Indigent Females in Boston, and \$50,000 to be applied to the support of those females who, in legal phraseology are called "spinsters," or single women.

Hon. Frederick P. Stanton, Secretary of State of Kansas Territory, under Governor Walker, and Hon. Marcus J. Parrott, the representative delegate of the late Territory, have left Washington for Kansas, to make a canvass for election to the United States Senate from the new State.

On the 27th of January, Mr. Schleiden wrote to the Secretary of State, Mr. Black, informing him that he had received a letter from the Bremen consul at Charleston stating that the consignee of the "Cyprius" had tendered duties at the custom house, which were refused, and from this the consul infers that the functions there are acting no longer for the States, and the minister therefore asks how are the Bremen captains and consignees of goods imported from Bremen in Bremen vessels to any port in South Carolina to act in order to avoid all violations of the revenue laws of the United States? Does the government hold itself responsible to the owners of goods now stored in or which may hereafter be placed in the United States bonded warehouses at Charleston; and in case of a disunion of the United States custom-house at Charleston, will Bremen vessels be permitted to proceed thence on their voyage without hindrance on the part of the United States authorities?

Lord Lyons, under date of December 31st, acquaints the Secretary of State that he has received a letter from the British consul at Charleston, in which it is stated that South Carolina has passed an ordinance declaring, in effect, that the custom-houses of the United States in South Carolina are converted into custom-houses of that State, and that the revenue laws adopted show that duties are to be collected on account of that State. The consul calls attention to several practical difficulties connected with the entry and clearance of British vessels, which may arrive at any moment, and Lord Lyons demands the government to furnish him, without delay, such information respecting its wishes and intentions as may enable him to give definite instructions to the consul, and to remove any apprehension which may exist that the abolition of duties of the United States custom-houses will be allowed to subject British vessels or commerce to loss, injury or inconvenience.

Mr. Tassaro, the Spanish minister, on December 31st, calls Secretary Black's attention to a letter from the Spanish consul at Charleston, relative to custom affairs in that city.

Next, Secretary Black is informed by Lord Lyons that the South Carolina authorities have removed the buoys, withdrawn the light ship, etc., and request that he cause the light and buoys to be replaced to warn vessels of their danger, and in conclusion, desires such information as will allay anxiety of British subjects.

Mr. Schleiden also complains, under date of January 8th, that the lights in Charleston harbor have been extinguished.

Among the documents, is also a letter from ex-Judge Magrath, dated from the Executive Department of South Carolina, saying that the activity of the pilots will prevent any serious injury or inconvenience to commerce.

On the 10th instant, Secretary Black replied to Lord Lyons, and sent a copy of his letter to Messrs. Schleiden and Tassaro. He says that he had laid Lord Lyons' communications before the President, who had deeply regretted that any injury should happen to the commerce of foreign or friendly nations, and especially that British subjects at Charleston should suffer by the anomalous state of things existing there.

Secretary Black then quotes from the law to show that the jurisdiction of the federal government to impose duties on goods imported into the limits of the United States and collect duties is exclusive. Whether the state of affairs now existing at Charleston will or will not be regarded as sufficient reason for not executing the penalties incurred by British subjects is a question, says the Secretary, which Lord Lyons will see necessity for raising until it is practically arisen. Each case will, no doubt, have its peculiarities, and Secretary Black regrets that this consideration compels him to decline giving any assurances on the points presented. The Treasury Department, he says, will give public information as to the condition in which South Carolina has put the coast.

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COMMUNICATIONS.

Letter from a Virginian in Kansas.

The following are extracts of a letter from a Virginian now in Kansas, to his friend R. B. Jr., in this place.

LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS, Jan. 10, 1861.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I have read with great pleasure your patriotic letter of the 9th inst., and answer with equal pleasure. I am, "anxious and to the mature born" of the noble old Commonwealth in which you now reside; and am as loyal to all the interests of the Old Dominion as those rash and unreasonable men in her midst, who now seek to plunge her into revolution and ruin. But while loyal to Virginia, I am no less loyal to the Union and the Constitution, and the Government. My ancestors helped to secure our Liberty and Union, and I was a degenerate son, did I not seek to perpetuate that for which they shed their blood.

The times are big with trouble, and it is threatened to break up this Union, because Lincoln has been elected. Now, after the South went into the election; after Mr. Lincoln has been constitutionally elected, is it not unfair that that act be nullified? But it is not to be nullified on the basis of his avowed hostility to the South. This is not true, Pennsylvania, with her large electoral vote, voted for him because of his pledges in favor of a tariff to protect her manufacturing interests, the California and Oregon voted for him for the sake of a Pacific Railroad; and how many thousands voted for him to get rid of Democratic misrule, we have no means of estimating. I affirm, without fear of contradiction, after a residence of four years in Kansas, that the famous attempts to force slavery, and a Constitution which four-fifths of the citizens spurned, upon Kansas, was the main cause of Mr. Lincoln's election. [The writer then enumerates occurrences to sustain his position.]

That election was a tremendous protest of the whole nation against the Democratic party. I affirm that more than one half of the voters cast for Lincoln had no reference whatever to slavery.

I remark, in the second place, that from the foundation of our government, the South has had nearly four-fifths of the Presidents, and of all the offices; and has always gotten all that she has ever asked for from the General Government. She asked for and got Texas, with the privilege of making four States out of her; she asked for and got the Mexican War, and Mexican Territory and California; she asked for and got the Missouri Compromise; she asked for and got the repeal of that compromise; she asked for and got the Fugitive Slave Law; she asked for and got the Cincinnati platform, and yet, with all these trophies, there are those who would rush her headlong into revolution, and give up all the guarantees that she has obtained from the General Government. If, in the blindness of suicidal madness, Virginia will go out of this Union, she loses all the guarantees of the Constitution which she now has.

In the third place, the real interests of Virginia are not with the Cotton States who have seceded. She does not wish to reopen the Slave Trade, and have thousands of cannibals throng upon her shores; she raises no cotton, sugar, or rice, and does not wish free trade, what Virginia wants is protection and encouragement to her vast mineral resources. I affirm that she will not get it by uniting her destiny with the Cotton States. And I do hope that our noble old Commonwealth will have too much self-respect and wisdom to tie on as the tail end of that rash, nullifying and seceding State, South Carolina, now in a complete state of anarchy. It was not wise, nor generous, nor fraternal for South Carolina to rush madly into revolution without even so much as consulting the interests of her sister States. And due self-respect will forbid Virginia from following a State who cares for no other interest than her own, and who has not wisdom enough to protect that.

Fourthly, the Cotton States having broken up one government to the extent of their ability, and having proven false to their Southern brethren, would not be the most desirable partners in a new Confederacy. Even if a new Confederacy were formed, these same men who have seceded from the old, would secede from the new whenever they thought it their interest to do so. There are thousands of good and true men in the Border States, who would not be tolerated in South Carolina to-day. And yet the Disunionists of Virginia wish you to have for friends in a new Confederacy men who would drive from it, had they the power, your best citizens.

Fifthly, your best citizens. The 10th amendment to the Constitution says: "Powers not prohibited by the Constitution to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people." Section 10 of Article I, enumerates "powers prohibited," among which are, "that no State shall enter into alliance or confederation; lay any duty of tonnage; keep troops or ships of war in time of peace; enter into any compact with another State." Now, secession implies, of necessity, that all these prohibited powers shall be exercised by the seceding States; and they are being exercised. This is either treason, or rebellion, or revolution.

This government is an organism, as much so and as perfect as the human frame; the hand, or the eye, or the foot has as much right to secede from the body as one State has to secede from the Union.

Virginia seems very sensitive about Coercion. Now, coercion does not mean that an army shall be sent to South Carolina, to butcher her people; it simply means that the property of the Federal Government shall be protected, and the revenues collected. This, the President is bound by his oath to do; and after Virginia helped to elect him, she ought not to complain so much if he does the very thing which she elected him to do, and made him swear that he would do. And all this has the more force when we remember that Virginia money helped to buy and make this property, and that she owns part of it.

What then, you ask, is the duty of our noble old State? It is to abide by the Union, the Constitution, and the laws, as she promised to do when she cast her vote for Bell, to contend for her rights in, not out of the Union; to retain all the guarantees of protection to her property by the Federal Government, and not to give them up by going out of the Union; to tell Gov. Floyd that he had better clear up his army affairs before he undertakes to precipitate Virginia into a revolution; to tell Mason to go back to the Senate and clear the galleries before he clears Virginia out of the Union. Why it is the maddest frenzy of folly to break up this glorious government, under which, upon the testimony of the Disunionists themselves, "we have prospered" as no nation under the Sun ever did.

He who says this, never was, is not now, and never expects to be a Republican; he is as loyal to the State of his birth as any man in it; he is an Old Line Whig and a Presbyterian. Faithfully yours,

A. W. PITZER.

It is the duty and privilege of every Virginian to examine and decide upon any action of the approaching Convention that may dissolve the connection of the State with the Federal Union, or change the organic law of the same.

What! yield up the power to the Convention, to involve us in disunion, rebellion, and

civil war, when it may prove that compromise and conciliation may better serve our purpose?

After all the time that has been spent in bringing Virginia from the dwelling place of the savage to its present condition; after all the bloodshed in its defence, and after the maintaining of its civil polity; after all the labors of philosophers, statesmen, and divines to civilize and Christianize it; after the time, the capital, the energies employed from age to age to improve and develop it, are we to resign into the hands of the Convention its destiny, irrevocably and forever? Rouse up to what you owe our fathers; rouse up to what you owe your children, and reserve in your own hands the destiny of Virginia! Warm up your State pride and love!

Hence I love my country, and partake of kindred agonies for her sake. She visits oftentimes my midnight dream. Her glory meets me with the earliest beam of light, which tells that morning is awake.

MARKHAM. Fauquier Co., Jan. 30, 1861.

The assigned cause of our present difficulties, at least among Virginians, is a denial on the part of the North to acknowledge us as equals in regard to the ownership, and consequently